# IronWatch

SEPTEMBER 2015 | ISSUE 37

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# ABYSSAL TIDINGS

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome back to another thrilling issue of the **IRONWATCH!**

This time, we have a couple massive articles, and pictures galore! However, we always love more content, and so please let us know if you'd be interested in writing articles on a regular basis, regarding Kings of War, Warpath, Deadzone, Dreadball, Mars Attacks, or any other Mantic game system.

Doing this helps us have a more consistent flow of articles from issue-to-issue, as well as helps you get exposure for writing for your blog or portfolio. It can be battle reports, stories, art and comics, special rules and scenarios, or any other content you'd be interested in submitting, so please let us know via email if you're interested.

Plus, with Kings of War shipping into everyone's hands in the near future, please let us know with articles and batreps how you like the Second Edition rules, and what new tactics and strategies you've tried with the new options available.

As always, whether you're a new reader or have been with us since that start just a little over three years ago, thanks for reading, and Welcome to the Watch!

-Austin

*Cover art by Boris Samec*
*Title art by Mark Peasley*

*Contact us and submit articles at:*
***ironwatchmagazine@gmail.com***

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*Please note that, while we here at* **Ironwatch** *attempt to deliver you the best products and ideas we can, we cannot guarantee the balance of any scenarios or special rules presented herein. If you find any errors, grammar mistakes, or rule imbalances, please contact us on the Mantic Forums (Look for the discussion labeled "Ironwatch Issue X Feedback") and let us know what we could do to improve your fan-produced magazine. If you are interested in writing, illustrating, or editing for our magazine, please let us know on the feedback discussion as well so you can get in on the action!*

All models used in this publication are from the respective author's own personal collections, and any models displayed herein are not intended to challenge the status of the copyrights of their respective owners. All rights are reserved to their respective owners.

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# THE IRON FORGE

Welcome back to the Iron Forge.

On display this month for you we have:

- Adam Morrow, with his camouflaged and positioned Deadzone Enforcers
- Boston Miniatures, with their awesome Asterian Kalyshi Dreadball team, as well as a fantastic Deadzone display later in this issue
- Geoff Burbidge, with his incredible Dreadball Convict team
- Marcel Popik, and an outstanding selection of Mars Attacks Novas Vira as well as some breathtaking terrain.

*LOKA Ice King by Paul Scott*

*Starkiron Tony Dreadball player by Darren Lysenko*

Keep tuned in next month for more fantastic models, and if you have some painted Mantic minis you'd like featured to possibly become an Iron Forge artist, please email high resolution photos of your miniatures to ironwatchmagazine@gmail.com.

Please include your name and/or Mantic forum name. You can also provide descriptions of your paint jobs and titles if you'd like!

# ADAM MORROW

I got a few more Enforcers painted up this month in between other models, including a slight conversion to one for laying prone (an interesting idea for Deadzone, as there are as many downsides as upsides for prone, with LOS being drawn from that low).

# BOSTON MINIATURES

# GEOFF BURBIDGE

# GEOFF BURBIDGE

**C.C.D.**
**915 941 4987**

**C.C.D.**
**770 300 007**

**C.C.D.**
**522 207 911**

**C.C.D.**
**905 866 1900**

# MARCEL POPIK

# MARCEL POPIK

# MANTIC CALENDAR

If you have Mantic-related events or tournaments you'd like to add, please PM Matt Gilbert or Austin Peasley on the forums or **email us** with your event's date, time, location, cost, a brief description, and a URL for more information.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and indicates where Mantic games are being enjoyed, and not necessarily where Mantic will be making an official appearance (Save for the Mantic HQ, of course!).

## September

**9/18** **Kings of War Final Tournament**
9:00 AM—12:30 PM
This event is a part of the In the Ludo Ergo Sum Charity Game Days.
Alcorcón, Madrid, España

**9/26** **Conquest 2015**
This event features lots of different tournaments for all sorts of games, as well as cosplaying and possibly game playtesting.
The Shoreham Centre, 2 Pond Rd, Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 5WU, United Kingdom

**9/26** **Dreadball Tournament**
1:00 AM—11:00 AM
Come by for a Dreadball Tournament in Madrid, as this tournament is aimed at newcomers and rookies.
Alcorcón, Madrid, España

*Deadzone Plague Teraton by Jamie O'Toole*

## October

**10/3** **Kings of War Grand Tournament**
9:00 AM—12:30 PM
$10 for the Friday, $30 for the Saturday, and $40 for the Saturday & Sunday.
This will be our 4th year as a GT event and the first time we are rolling out Kings of War. We'll have a 3 round 1k event Friday evening starting at 6pm, and then a 3 round 2k Saturday or 6 round Saturday and Sunday.
Holiday Inn Huntsville- Research Park, Huntsville, Alabama (5903 University Dr Huntsville, Alabama 35806

**10/3** **UK Clash of Kings 2015 - The Final**
£29.99 per person
9:00 AM—12:30 PM
Who will be crowned the best Kings of War general in the United Kingdom? Come join in the fun to find out!
SANCTUARY GAMING CENTER St. Michaels & All Angels Church, St. Michaels Street, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire NG17 4GP

*Dreadball Extreme Poster by Matthew Adlard*

# THE Q&A MAILBAG

**Organized by Matt Gilbert**

The Q&A Mailbag feature (Formerly 'Q&A With Chris Palmer') contains questions from the community via the forum, answered by Chris Palmer, Web and Events Coordinator at Mantic Games. If anyone wants to ask a question they can on the Mantic Forums.

**Can we see more "retail only" stuff in future kickstarters to support FLGS.**

*Ed. Note: FLGS means "Friendly local gaming store."*

This is a really interesting question! The short answer is yes – we will continue to develop kits and miniatures outside of Kickstarter for our main range. Expect to see plenty of new Kings of War kits arrive, and maybe even some new DreadBall and Deadzone miniatures, in the next 12 months!

There's tons of other retail support in the pipeline too, the Kings of War campaign book (a Kickstarter item but one designed to promote army building and playing games,) organized play kits and more.

This doesn't mean we won't be using Kickstarter anymore however, and we have some very exciting projects coming up we think people are going to love.

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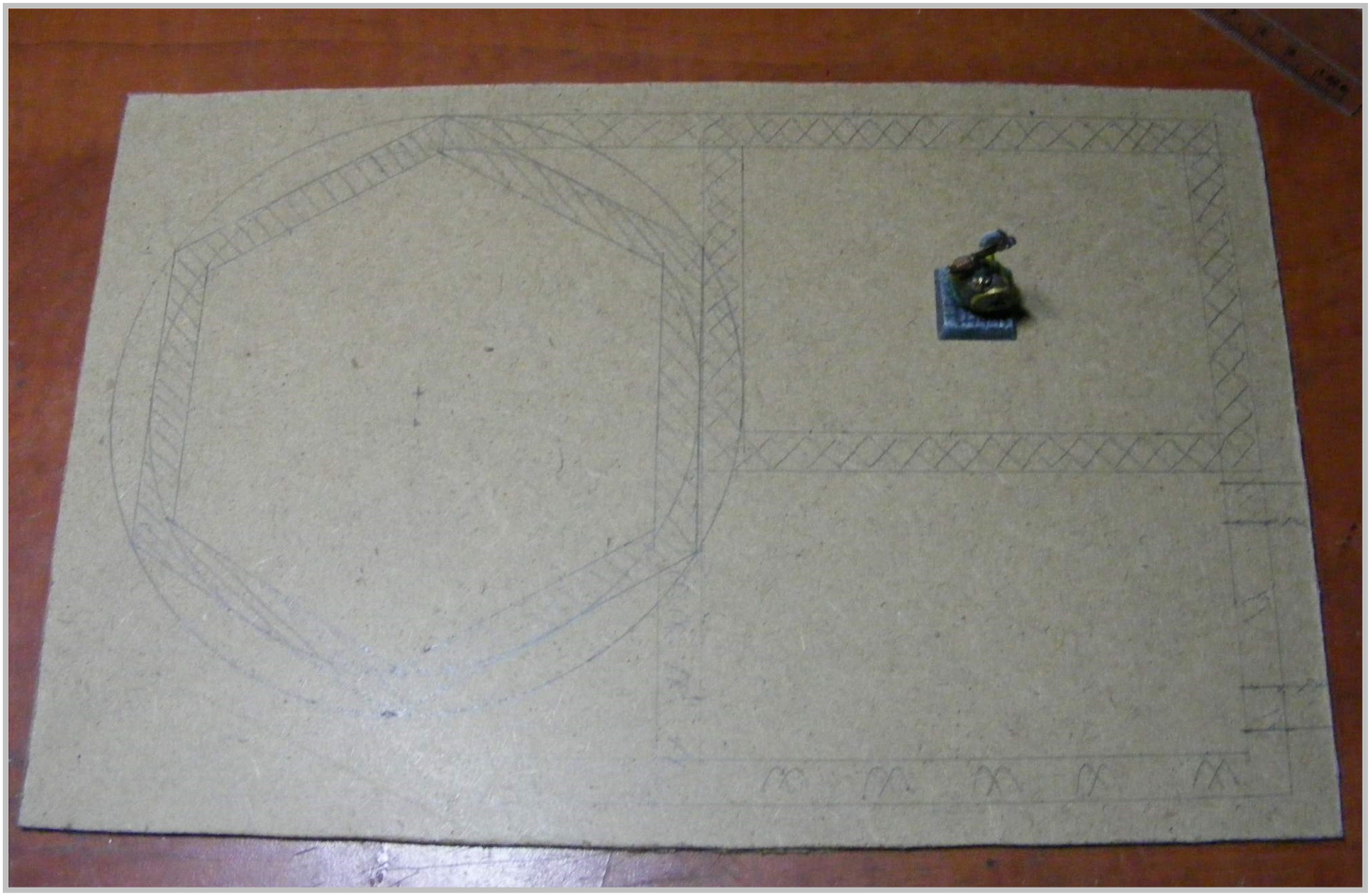
That's all for this month, but if you have your own questions, don't forget to submit them on the Mantic Forums. Thanks Chris!▪



# BUILDING THE FISH FARM

**By Peter—"Tek Thornisson"**

*Editor's Note: Peter has been kind enough to send us several terrain-making tutorials for the next few issues. While they don't have step-by-step written overviews, the materials are simple, and a picture (of a tutorial step) is worth a thousand words!*

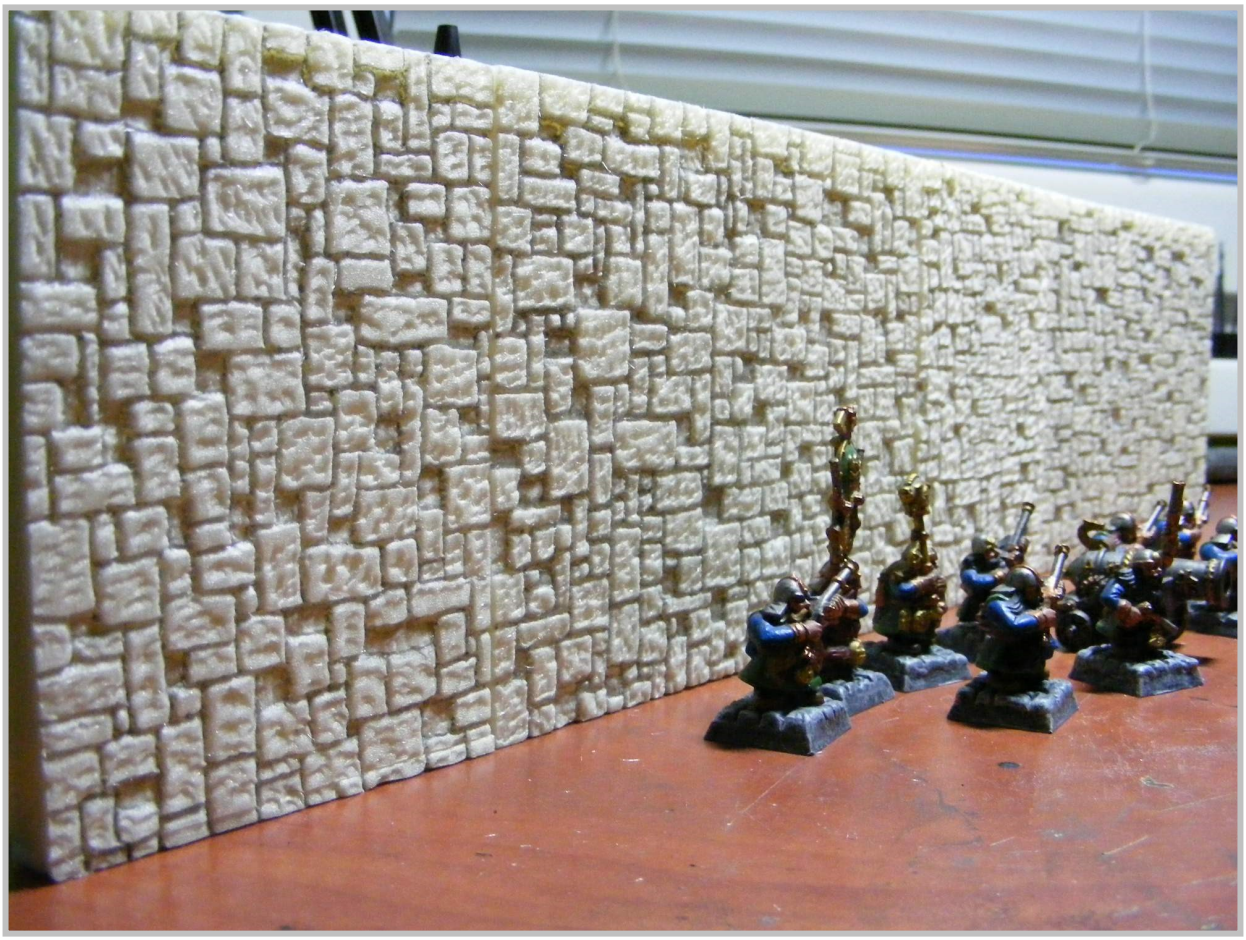
*"I work until now only with high-density polystyrene-often colored has a smooth, tough structure.*

*The only special tool I use is a desktop foam cutter from Proxxon.*

*The other tools all modelers have at home:*

- *Retractable knife*
- *Scalpel with disposable blades (for very detailed cutting)*
- *Brushes*
- *Pencil*
- *Toothpick*

*And endless imagination!"*



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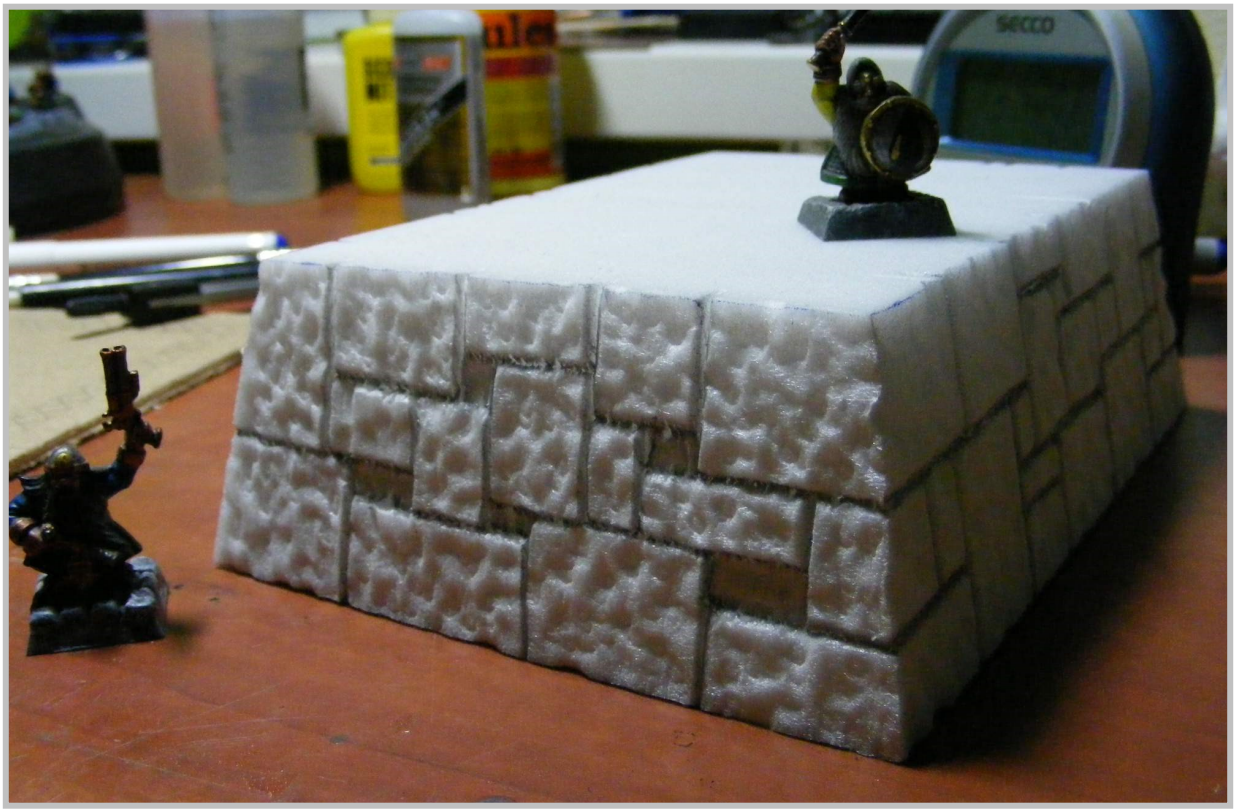

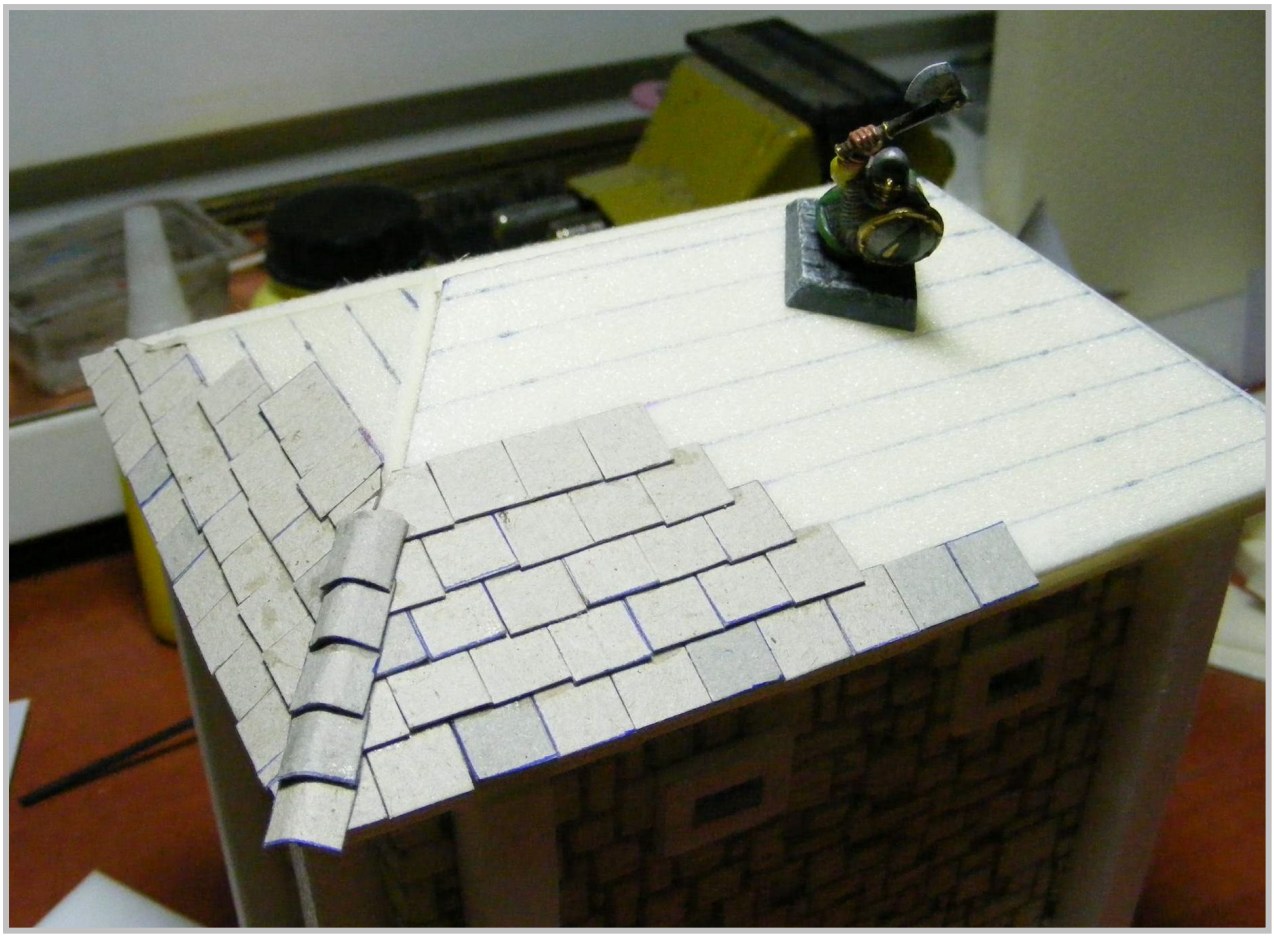

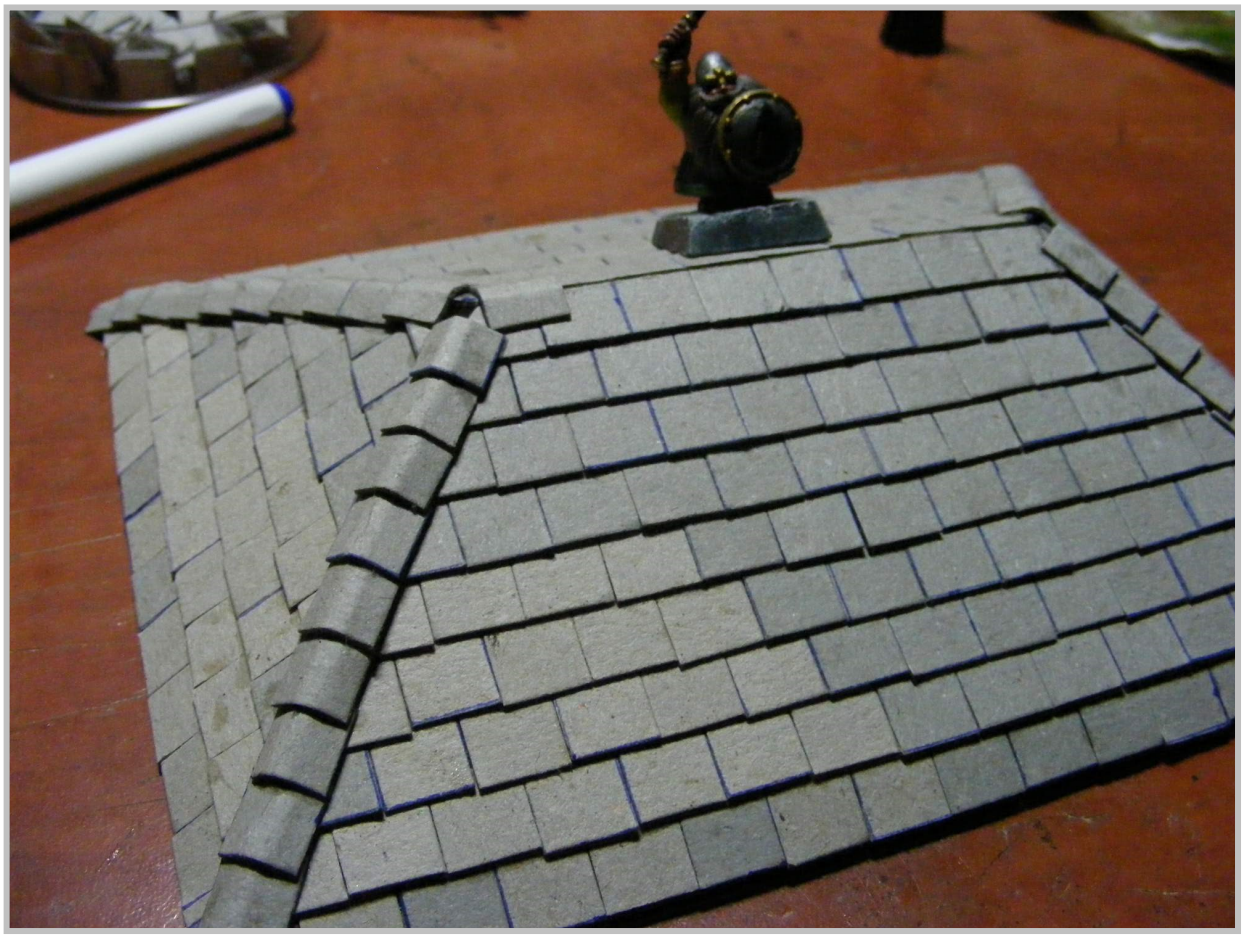

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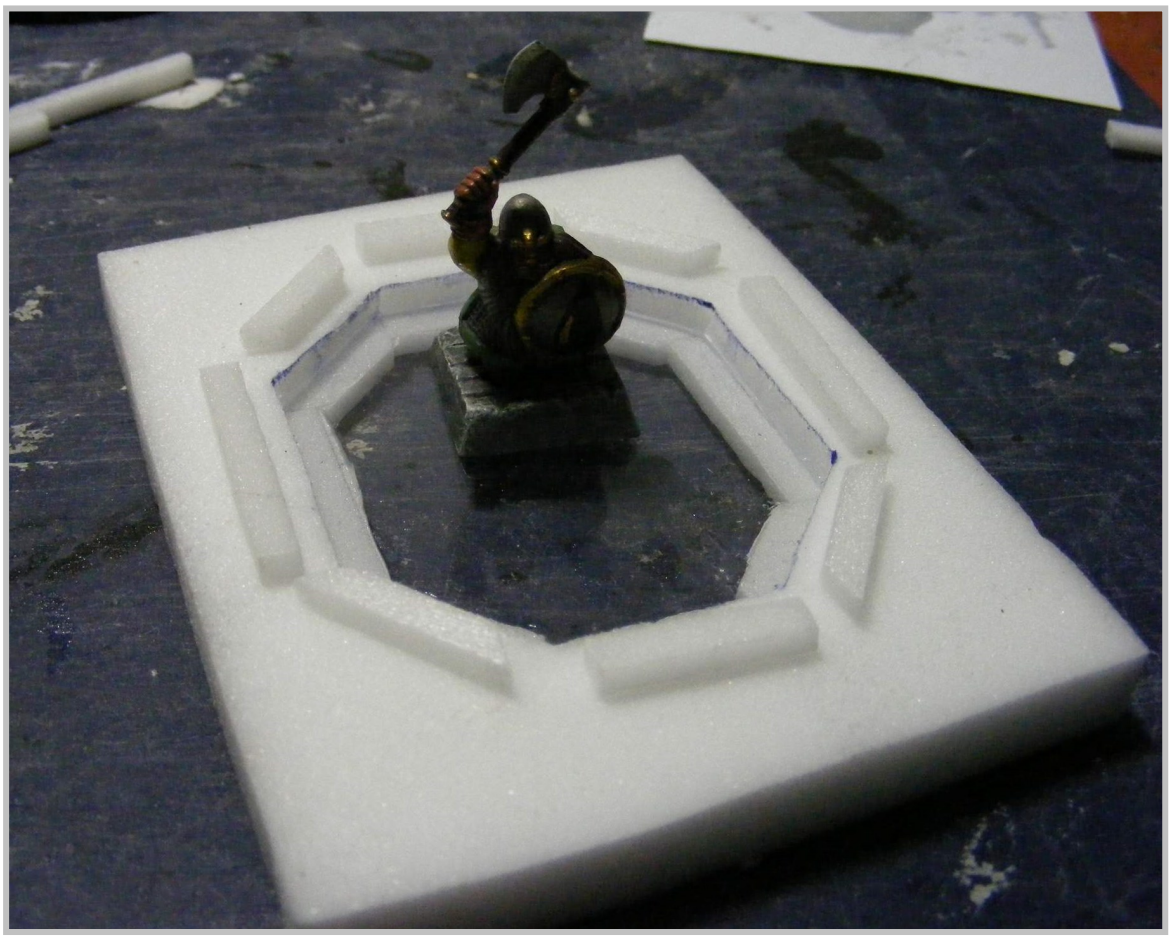
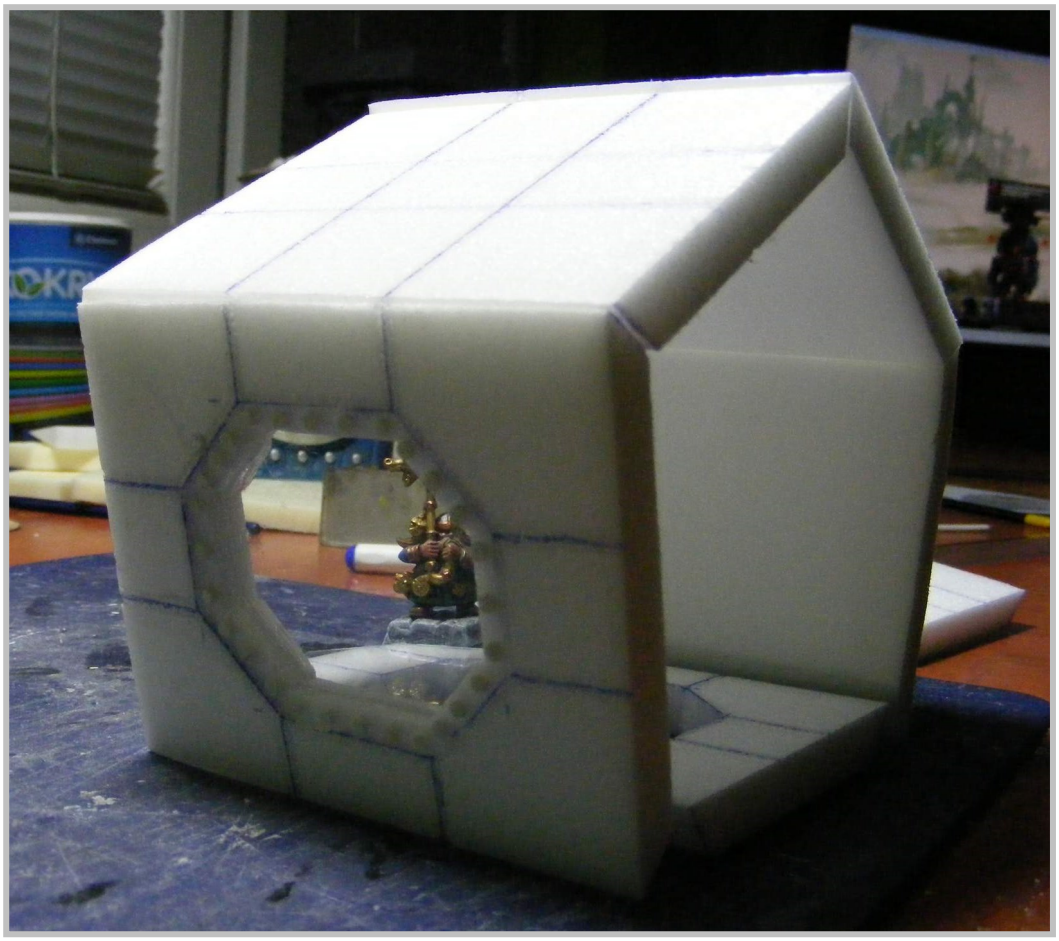
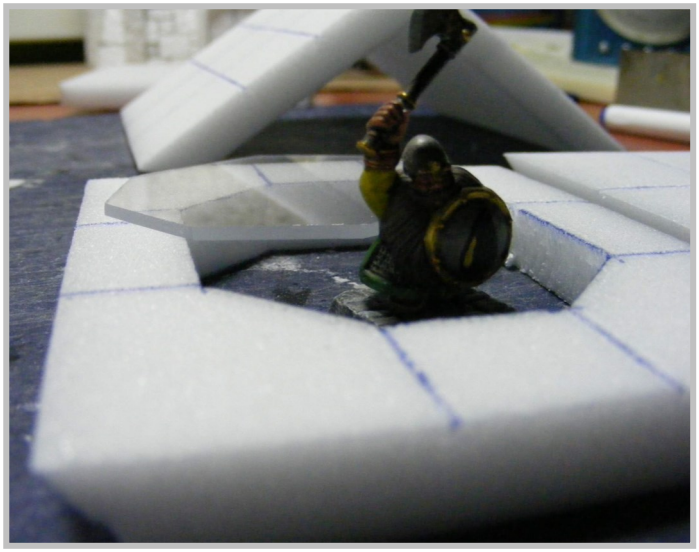
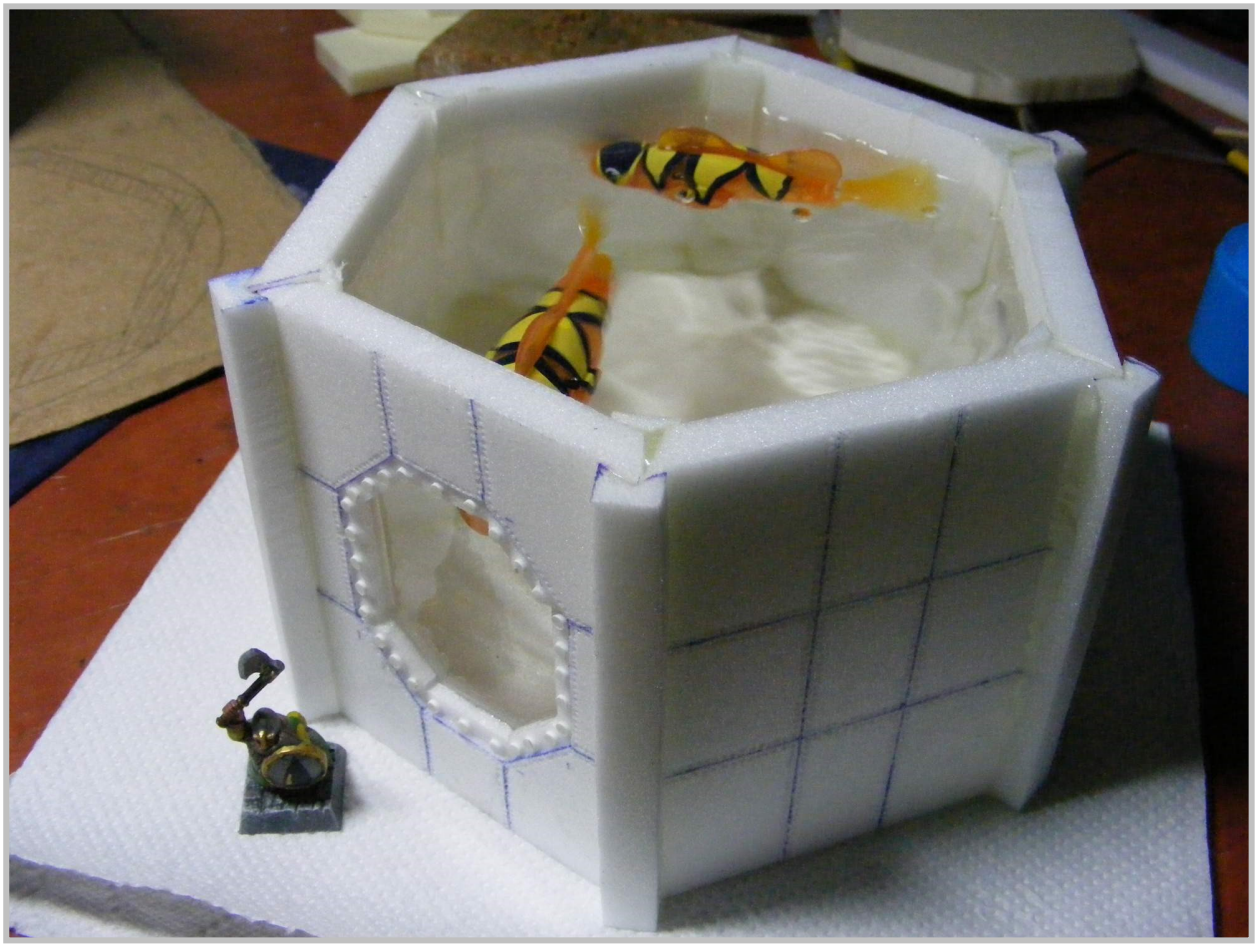
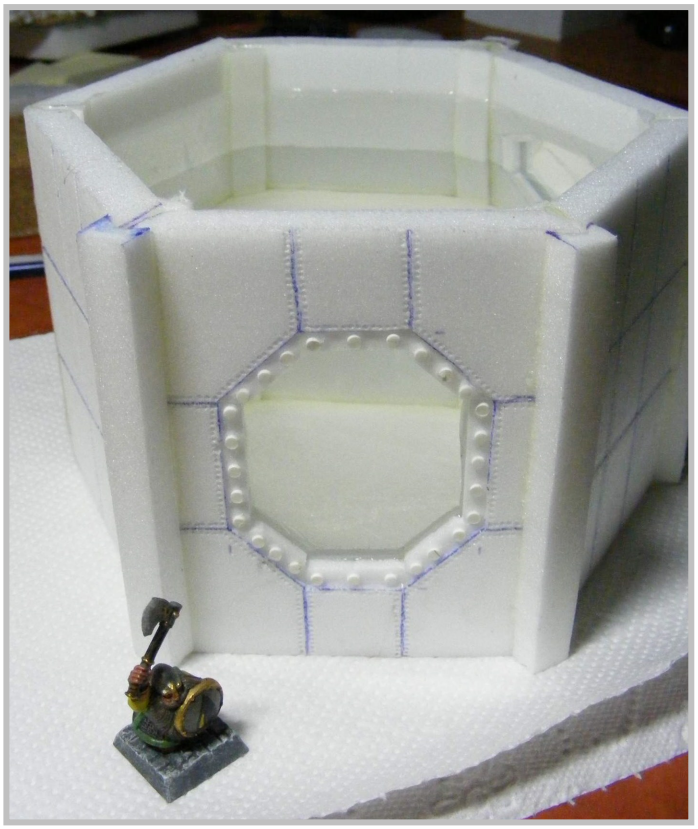
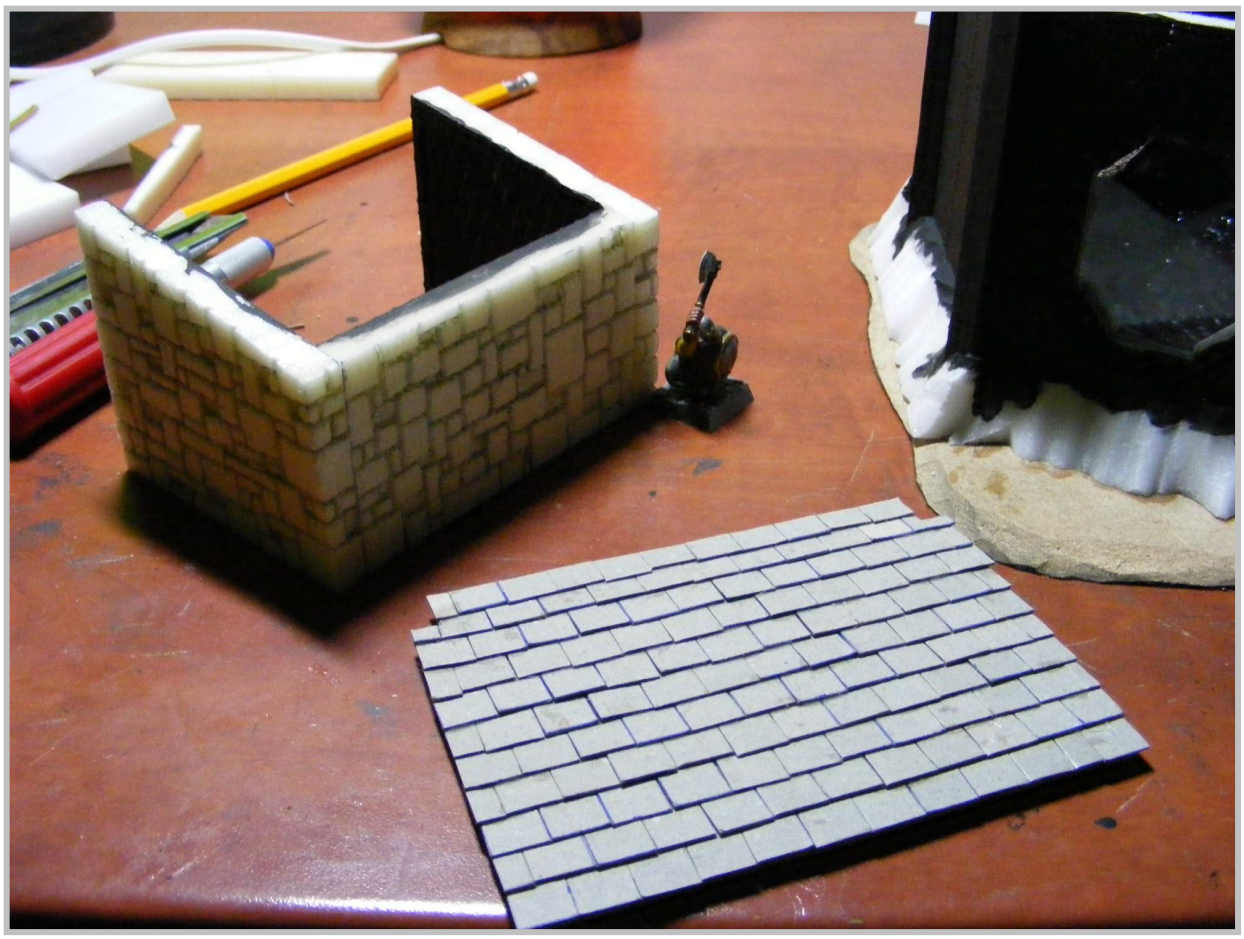


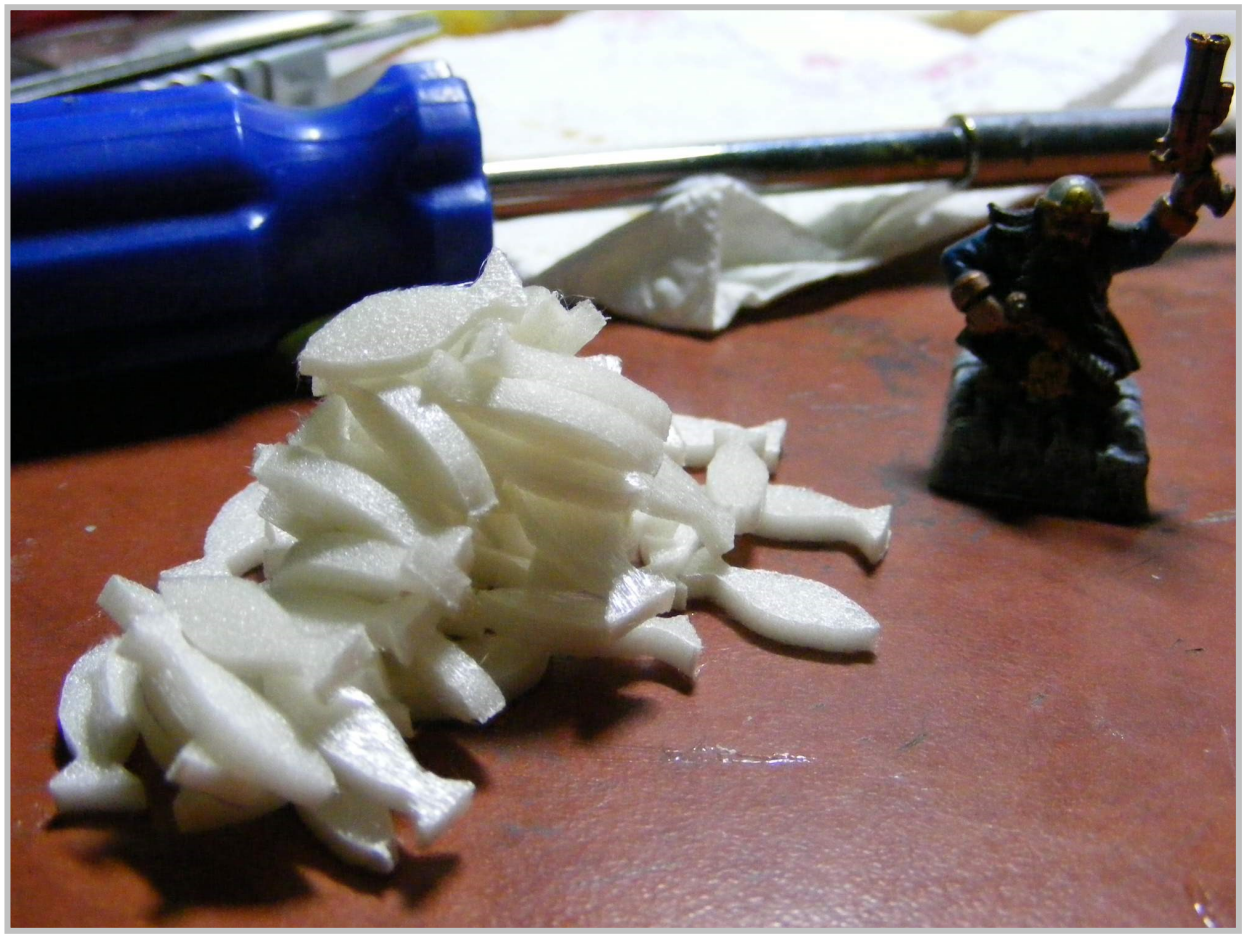


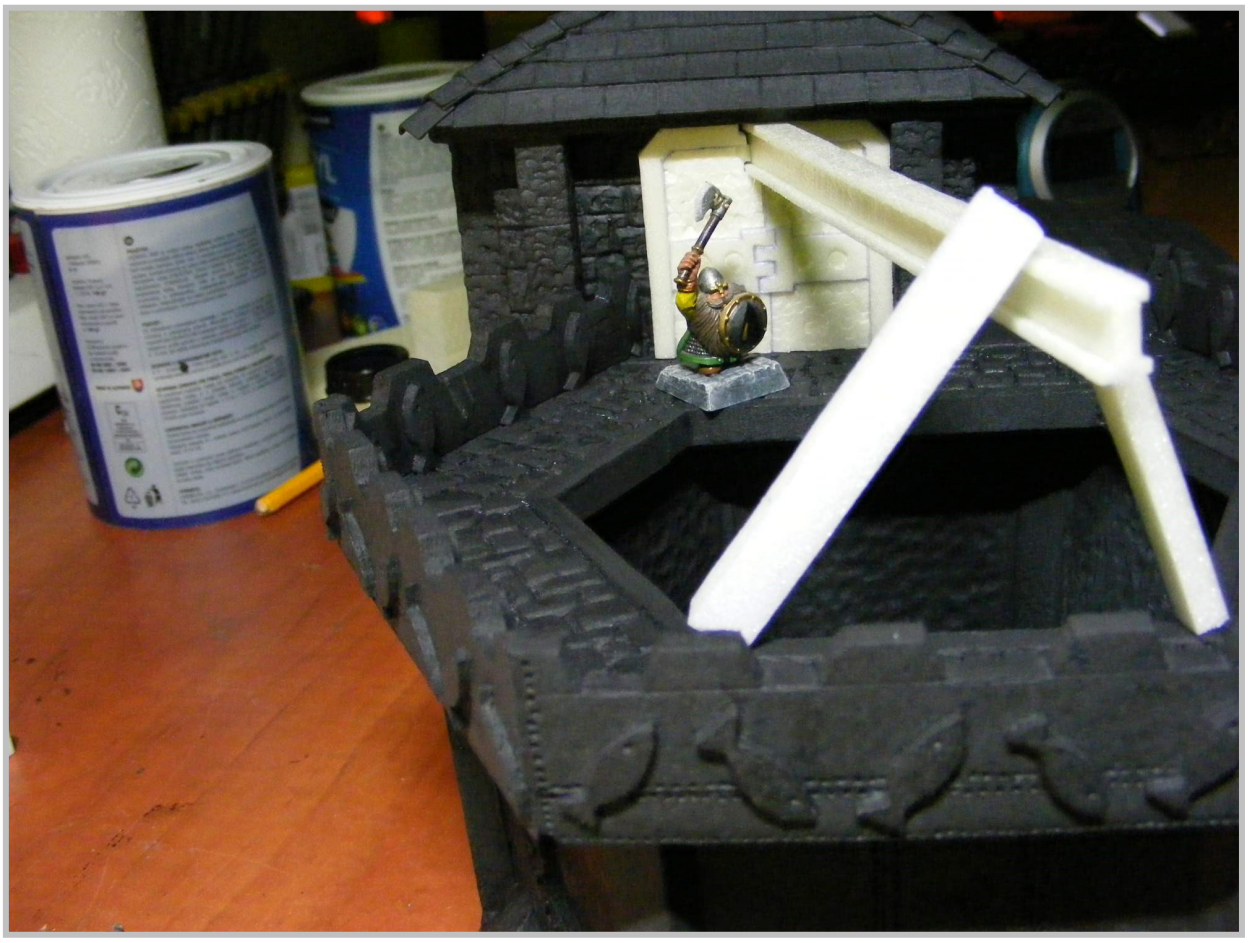












secco

SECCO

*Thanks Peter! Here's a sneak peek at one of Peter's other projects: A massive Dwarven Fortress, dwarfing the relatively-tiny Fish Farm to the lower left.*

*All the units were deployed and ready to go, when a great rumbling is heard from the towers.*

# GENCON 2015: KINGS OF WAR MEGA BATTLE

**By Mike Carter**

So once again did the dastardly forces of evil join together in their eternal struggle against the sainted forces of good. The battlefield was Gencon, and so far the forces of good had managed to stop the evil hordes every time, with a record of 4-0. Could they continue to hold out?

We had 12 players at the mega battle - for 6000 pts per side. For this game we played "Pillage!", with three towers as the objectives. Gencon has more space constraints and is much tighter about their gaming area; While at Origins we grabbed a third table, here we were forced to just use the two, with the objective towers being placed every four feet (conveniently marked from the Learn to Play sessions earlier in the day)

I like to make the mega battle a bit more fun and light hearted. In the past we have had random events happen to various units, but this year the players were in for a BIG surprise. After deployment, two giants emerged from each tower to stand watch over them.

These initially counted as blocking terrain; However, after both sides had a turn, then at the end of your turn if you had a unit within control range of a giant, you could attempt to recruit it on a 4+. If you had more giants

than the other team the test got harder, and each side could only control three of these. The catch was that in order to control the tower and score for the win, you had to remove both giants around it. I was initially worried this would be too easy. Foolish me.

It turns out the giants were MUCH more difficult to control than anticipated. The second turn for evil had them attempting to recruit five of these monsters - and fail every roll. This became a pattern throughout the game, with three of the giants not being recruited until the last turns of the game.

Wanting to make this a more epic battle, I encouraged people to bring bigger monsters than they normally would in a 1000 pt game. Thus we had and Undead Giant on the table, as well as some dwarfs who brought a Steel Behemoth.

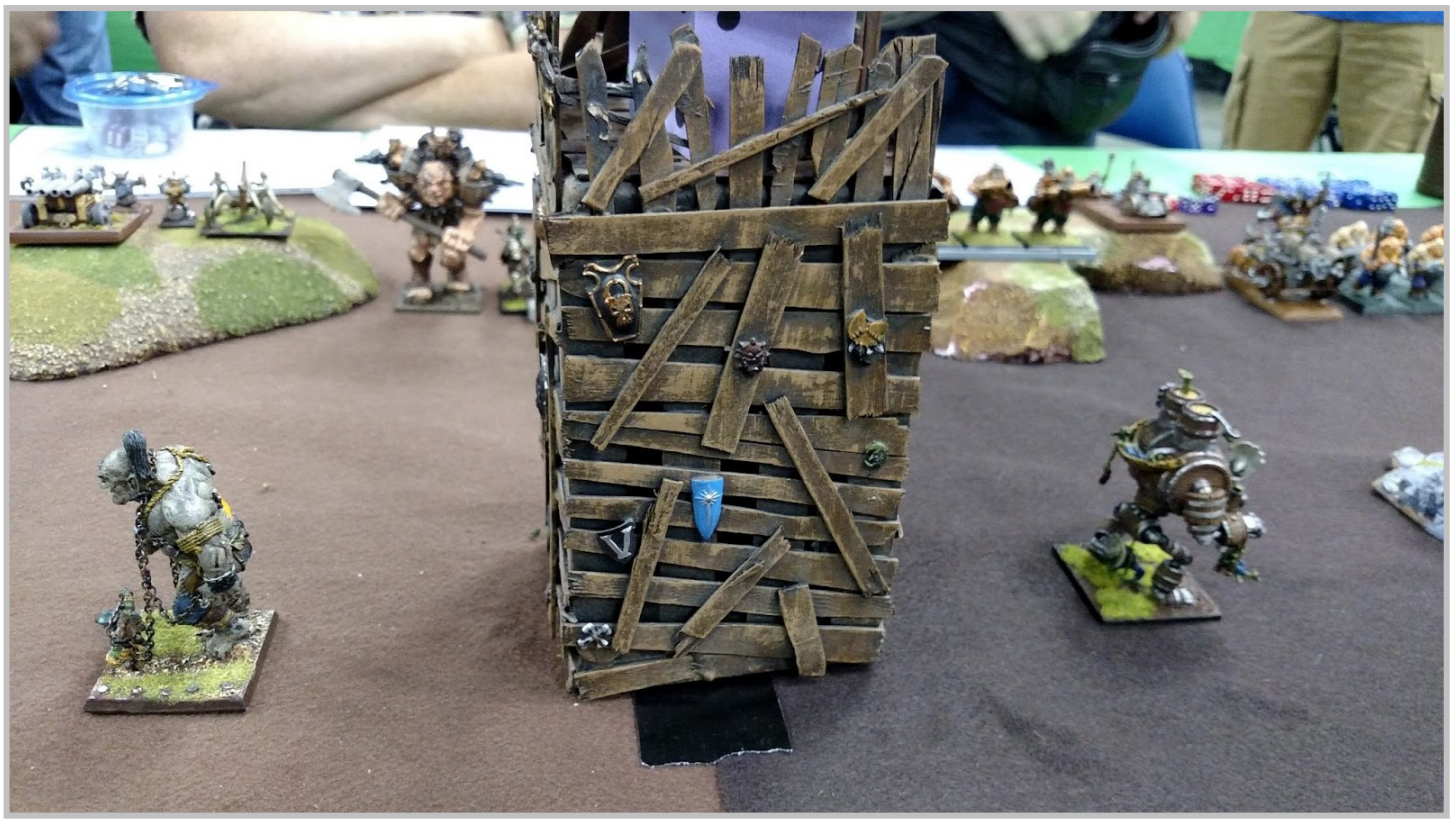
*Postal Service giants*

*The forces of evil*

*The forces of good*

*Discussing 'strategery'*

*And the fight begins!*



*Slave Giant, and a Malifaux Whiskey Golem which was big enough to be a giant*

*The forces of good had more gold than the evil ones did, and recruited two bands of giants to help in the battle. Giant chariots and dwarf beserker brock riders attacked the undead cavalry*

*Basileans maneuver and charge, while the Vampire riding Undead Dragon uses the un-recruited giant to protect his flank.*

*Simple rebasing turned an awesome Mage Knight Siege figure into a dwarf Steel Behemoth*

*Abyssal Dwarfs and Twilight Kin fight against Basileans and Elves*

*One of the giants finally being attacked*

*The Whiskey Golem was the first casualty of the game, as the goblin swinging from his hand broke off quite quickly.*

*Kara has changed the basing for her regiment of halfbreeds (representing by the big walker) so that it slides back from its base, helping it to actually be in base contact with other units as it charges them with undead cavalry*

*The dragon and a giant attack some dwarfs*

*And the dragon goes after some ogre shooters*

*While the giant maneuvers itself so that after charging, it back up so that the tower keeps the dwarf from counter charging*

*Ariel the mermaid tries to sing to some Basilean men-at-arms, but they don't appreciate her song.*

*Can anybody manage to take control of these stubborn giants?*

*Moving up the halfbreeds*

*Halfbreeds with a flank attack on the horde of ogre warriors. This is not going to end well for somebody*

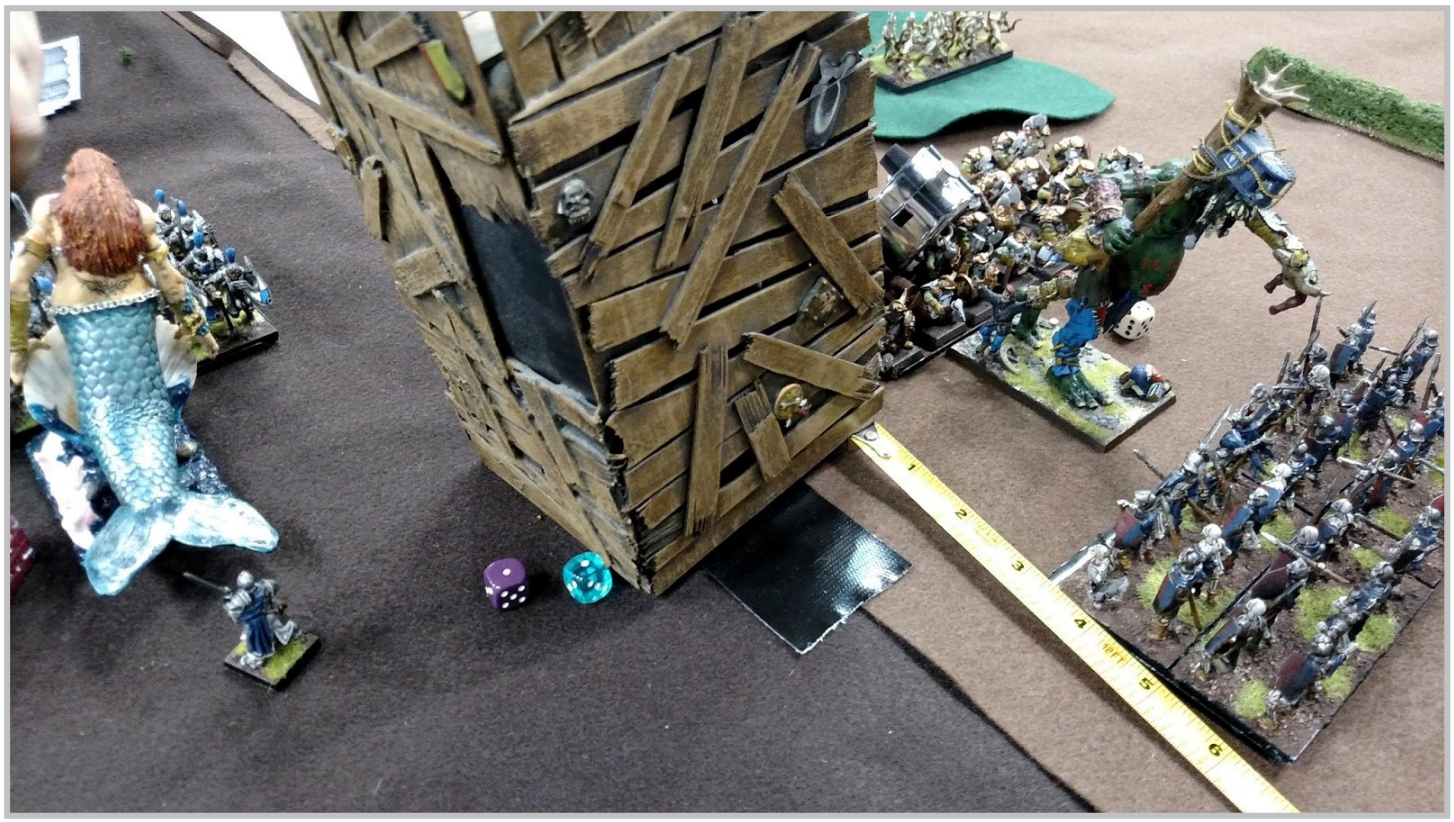
*Golems attack the steel behemoth (with a grotesque champion in the flank) while the undead cavalry destroy the organ gun in the background*

*The nutters on badgers aren't intimidated by the animated pile of bones*

*Skeletons line up against the dwarfs with the uncontrolled giant blocking them*

*At the end of the game, while the dwarfs were next to a tower, the undead giant contested it.*

*At the second tower, the steel behemoth and grotesque champion contested again contest the objective*



*For the center tower, it looked like the dwarfs would control it, because the skeletons were just out of range. However it was pointed out that the rickety tower sitting on the divide between two tables had been knocked over during the game.*

*A quick measurement resulted in the placement of the tower being correct by over an inch - which resulted in the skeletons going from being 1/4 inch out of range to firmly in range to contest it.*

*Zombie Regiment by George Adsett-Knutsen*

So the final result was no towers were controlled by either side - resulting in a win for the Giants!!! The scenario beat the players. So the record now stands at 4 - 0 - 1 in favor of the side of good. While the evil players claimed it as a tie, and thus not a loss, I still think of it as the giants winning.

A good time was had by all. A 12000 point game was played through in just under four hours. Everyone had a lot of fun, and they say they are looking forward to the next one.▪

# AMBUSH AT OUTPOST 7

**Miniatures painted by "Boston Miniatures"**
**Art and backgrounds by Boris Samec**
**Story by Austin Peasley**

Captain Fang screamed, his voice cracking a bit in terror as the enormous warped Plague beast soars down from the heavens. A string of audiomechanical curses comes blaring out of the loudspeaker on the side of the Stunt-bot as Kilpatrick tries to bring the bot's haphazard cannons to bear on the overhead menace.

Nearby, another scream echoing his own can be heard reverberating in a secure permasteel crate; One of the stunty snipers, judging from the nearby discarded rifle. He doesn't blame the cowardly git, and would have joined him in the relative safety of a similar crate had there been one of sufficient size. The chaos of the battle is everywhere, flaring in orange muzzle flashes, the glint of the dying sunset light on purple flesh and bone-white chitinous armor.

Taking in a gulping breath of air, Fang can't help but taste the battle as well. Familiar, almost comforting smells of cordite and plasma ozone mingle with the sickly-sweet smell the Plague seem to emanate. He remembered hearing somewhere that Plague actually infected others with a virus,

and a tiny, queasy part of the back of his mind started making retching noises at the thought of the smell being from swallowing the deadly miasma.

The rest of his mental chorus shushed the nausea and instead forced his gaze down to steady his pistol on the head of a howling Plague trooper. The howl vanished, as the head did the same in a spray of colorful fluids. There was a brief moment of elation as the other Plague apparently take a few steps backwards following the messy termination of their comrade. He takes the moment to pose with his pistol, giving them a toothy grin as they behold him: *Captain Fang, the spectre of Death itself-*

**WHUMP.**

Oh. Ohhhhh. The Plague soldiers hadn't been backing away from *him*, a committee of thoughts noted in worried and increasingly shrill voices. They'd been clearing space for the, for lack of a better term, Plague Dragon to land. For a moment, he gawked at seeing a mythical monster, such as he'd seen in Corporation-approved holobooks as a child. It's obviously some kind of native fauna, and was covered in the slick muscles and impenetrable bony plates instead of penciled -in scales, but the resemblance is still uncanny.

It would make him laugh, had he not been blanching in terror, and he could feel the scream bubbling back up in his throat. This job was *not* what the contract had specified.

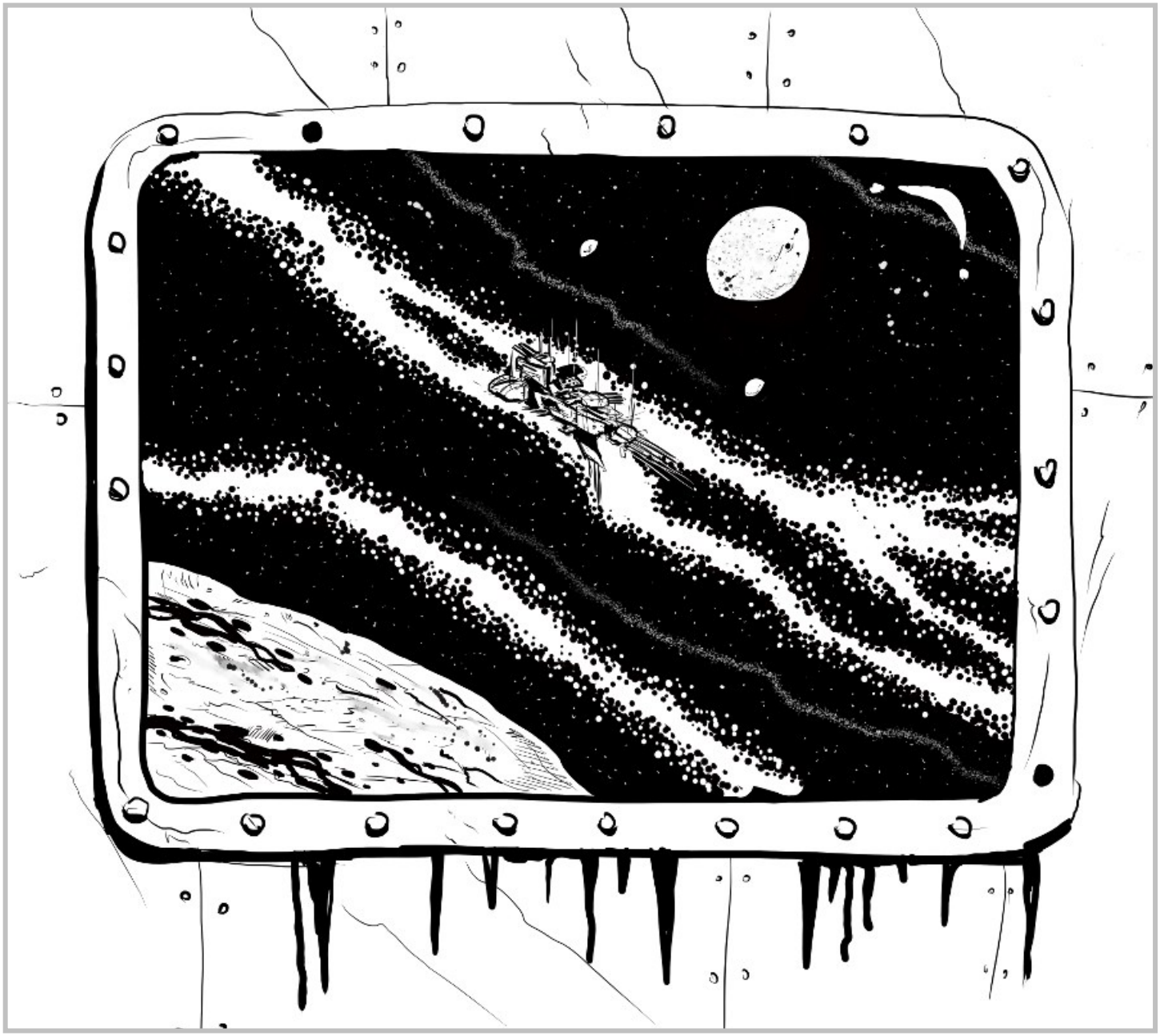
*****

**8 Hours Earlier…**

"I'm telling ya, they're gonna hear us, shoot us outta da sky, and then where will we be? Space dust! Yer gonna get us all killed for-"

Captain Fang grimaced, and turned to look down at the little indignant stunty. Kilpatrick had one of his foul cigars in his mouth, unlit for now to reduce unnecessary heat signatures, but was chewing the end in his mouth with a vengeance.

Fang gave him a shushing noise, echoed by a few of the nearby Marauders as they huddled next to the viewport. Next to him, Sartak consulted a hastily-scribbled diagram on a dirty noteslate, and murmured "Alright boss, should be riiiight about...now."



On cue, they emerged from the shadow of Klenarus IV's moon, the harsh light of the red star flushing the light in the cabin a bloody crimson. Fang nodded approvingly at his engineer's prediction, when Kilpatrick's harsh screech cut back in.

"Look! *Look!*" he said, gesticulating wildly with a long dirty finger. "Agh, it's *right there*. We're all gonna die, we're all gonna die." Fang wouldn't have been surprised if his whining could be heard across the void between the ships

The captain grunted, and shoved the little stunty aside, cursing inwardly as he saw that despite his numerous annoying flaws, the little gremlin was spot-on. Less than a hundred kilometers off, the Enforcer patrol craft was framed against the dying sun. The red light glittered off more weapon arrays than he cared to count, but more worrying were the little sets of blue and white lights marking the sensor pod arrays.

*Deadzone Marauder Ripper Suit by Jamie O'Toole*

He had made sure that the *Stareater's Folly* was running silent, shutting off everything except the bare minimum life support almost as soon as they dropped out of the hyperjump, and short of a few careful atmosphere ventings to bring them in line with their destination, everything else was powered off, or in the case of the ship's fusion core, shielded with as much lead insulation as he had been able to afford back on Maskal.

*Please be enough, please be enough,* Fang silently chanted, as he thought back to the Maskalian merchant who had, in retrospect, been surprisingly eager to offload so much contraband plating. Plating that, thinking back, had been far lighter than he had suspected lead-carbon stealth weave should have been.

He cursed inwardly at not bothering to look a gift-krork in the mouth, but it was too late for that now, and he had no other choice but to sit and wait it out. In theory, they could have tried doing a hard burn into atmosphere and landed in one of the concealing canyons that peppered the surface according to the old geological survey charts, but as fast as the *Folly* was, an

*Deadzone Reb Desolators by Nicodemus Sandberg*

Enforcer gunboat could catch her and burn her to atoms without straining itself.

As if detecting his thoughts, the Enforcer gunboat began to swivel towards their general direction, but the guns remained thankfully silent. A quiet *beep-bedeep* from Sartak's direction made him start. The engineer had a tiny datapad, and was wearing a puzzled expression as he examined something on it.

"Sartak, you damned fool, I told you we're running dark; Why in the star's names are you-"

The engineer cut him off with a finger motioning for him to wait, as he craned his head, listening to something piping in through a wired earpiece. He apparently finished listening, as he lowered the finger and turned to the captain, grinning with self-satisfaction.

"This," he said, tapping the datapad with a chewed-short fingernail, "Is running on less power than any of our brains are putting out right now, and is effectively invisible. She can't do much, nor for very long, but I wanted to check to see if there was any radio chatter from their comms to see if we were in the clear."

His expression soured. "There is a signal, but it's got a new encryption I haven't cracked yet. I saved it onto this, so it'll be ready in a few minutes once I have my main computing core powered up, but that will have to wait until we land."

He frowned. "I hate not knowin', Fang. Enforcers are difficult enough as it is without

them doing even *more* unexpected secret stuff while we're trying to work a contract."

Kilpatrick rolled his eyes and spat. "Oh, right, the Enforcers doin' unexpected secret stuff has you on edge? Sartak, you *are* aware that that's essentially all they do?"

The engineer returned the stunty's insolent glare, and began to clench a fist before Fang strode between the two of them. Looking back to Sartak, Fang nodded his head towards the door. "get on your console and be ready to decrypt that as soon as you have power; I don't fancy being left in the dark if there's intel we weren't informed about."

As the engineer nods and leaves, Fang rounds on Kilpatrick, who lets out a little *eep* and drops his cigar. "As for *you*, get yer ass down to the hangar and get yer bot ready for orbital drop. You hate being onboard? Fine; You'll get to secure the LZ," he said, relishing the look of dismay before the stunty swiped his cigar off the deck grating and strode off grumbling towards the hangar.

Kilpatrick's stunt-bot was in top condition, but even new off the factory line, they were always poorly equipped for orbital insertion. It was one of the many reasons the Corporation upgraded their forces to use Striders, as they could handle the rough landing with less difficulty. Fang figured it was the least he could do to repay the little

whiner for making the last few days hell for the rest of the crew.

A few long minutes passed as they glided through the void, and then with a bump, the hull began to rumble as the atmosphere of the planet made itself known. Fang sat up from the seat he'd been slouching in, and began barking out orders. "Alright, get those engines hot! I want gunners ready in the turrets; The Council only knows why they would have designated this Deadzone, and the last thing we want to do is get caught with our trousers down if whatever nasties here can fly."

He strode down the central hallway as orx and stunties ran past to their various stations. He stopped as he passed the robotics bay, and leaned his head in. "Sartak, how's that decryption coming?"

The engineer looked up from the Mawbeast harness he was tinkering with, and made a meaningful glance towards the computing console. There, six-inch letter displayed *"DECRYPTION IN PROGRESS: ESTIMATED 15 MINUTES REMAINING."*

Fang snorted in annoyance as well as amusement as Sartak went back to his tinkering, before striding past the bay and towards the cockpit. There, Jurine was wrestling with the controls, cursing and smacking the display in front of her as it beeped indignantly.

"Sah," she said before cursing and smacking the offending dials again, "It's gonna be a bit bumpy comin' in. The core took too

damnably long to heat back up, and we've got the engine thrust of a flatulent smokehog for at leas' another two minutes."

Fang couldn't help a nervous look at the rapidly-dwindling altitude numbers, as well as the continent in the viewscreen that was becoming *remarkably* larger with each passing second. Jurine let out a string of swearing ending with "-bedamnable hog-legged piece of space scrap," before flicking a bank of switches to her side and cranking forward the throttle.

The *Folly* responded with a roar, the entire ship shuddering but a lurch under Fang's feet matching the whoop of triumph his pilot let out. "About damned time ya scraploader! Now how's about you impress me for once?" she called out, as she hauled the ship into a loop and dive directly downwards. The inertial compensators helped somewhat, but surprised shouting echoed throughout the ship as she began plunging towards the ground.

"All right, that's enough!" he yelled, and Jurine pulled the ship out of the dive, still descending at a rapid clip but with Fang's stomach no longer in his throat. He gave her an annoyed look, which she returned unflinchingly before swooping the ship downwards, saying tersely "Sah, we're approachin' the dropzone. Overhead Outpost 7 in three, no, two minutes."

He nodded, and took the comm headpiece, dialing it to the hangar bay and calling out "Kilpatrick? Kilpatrick, are you ready for drop?"

There was a second or two of silent static, before a weasely voice replied "...Are you absolutely sure you need me to drop? Why not, you know, send the boys and me down in the shuttle instead?"

Fang grinned at the fruitless pleading, and replied "No can do; The shuttle would take longer to warm up than we've got, and besides, I know you've got this handled." In front of him, the display for the drop chutes blinked a red *READY* indicator over Kilpatrick's chute. He chuckled, and behind him he heard Jurine call out "Sah, we're over tha drop site now."

"Hey, Kilpatrick, you all strapped in?" There was a noise of confusion, and the stunty replied over the comm "Uh, well, yeah boss, why-*NowaitDON'T-*" With a snicker, Fang poked the *DROP* button over Kilpatrick's chute, and the comm cut to a sound of whistling wind and combination of stunty screaming and sounds of nausea.

He flicked off the comm array, standing, and said "Jurine, bring us around. I'll be taking a party to the site." With that, he stood, and strode towards the hangar, grabbing his favorite pistol from his quarters before meeting with the rest of the landing party on

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LIARS!!

the hangar bay deck.

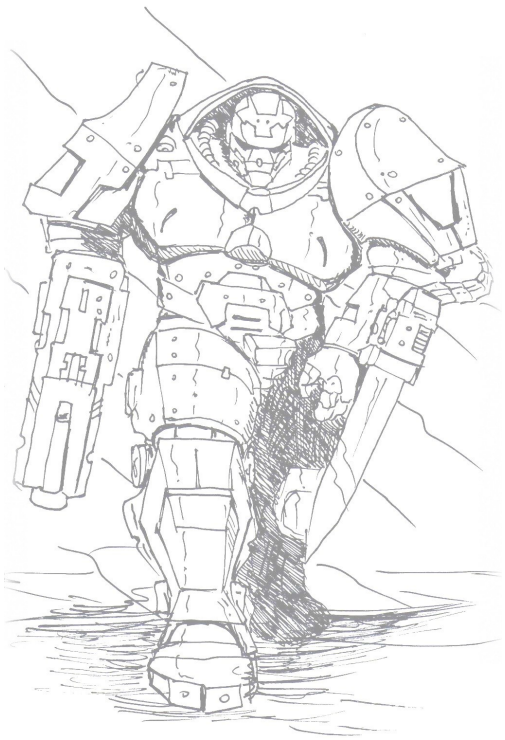
*****

*"Eh, see boss,"* droned Kilpatrick, for the umpeenth time, *"There's a reason the Corp halfwits make Deadzones, and it sure as snot ain't so they can install a new Egoburger joint."* The tinny voice echos out of the stunt-bot's speaker around the blasted ruins surrounding them. On one wall, a faded stencil saying 'Outpost 7' had been vandalized, and now just showed a stylized black skull.

Captain Fang rolled his eyes at Kilpatrick's whining, and motioned for the rest of his soldiers to move up into another decimated set of ruins. The little stunt was paranoid, enough to make a human smoking a twitchstick look like a Judwan monk in comparison. He'd gotten over his hard drop, albeit not without more than a little complaining, and before long they were making good time towards the objective locations Fang's contact had provided.

Kilpatrick's complaining was scarcely better than when they landed, making a single rude comment about the smell of the planet before clambering back into his stunt-bot and remaining there for the past five hours. The one time they stopped for a rest and a quick meal, he had refused to come out and had insisted that his rations be passed to him through the bot's hatch instead.

Worse than the little cowardly stunty, though, was Fang's apprehension about the contract. While he trusted his associate who had connected him with their temporary employer, he had yet to actually meet said employer in person. They had contacted him through voice-garbled drones; Fairly standard practice, except Sartak, for once, had been unable to trace the location and source of the drones, not even able to firmly



pin them as having launched on Maskal itself.

Sartak's news shortly after they landed at the outpost just affirmed his worries. He had called over Fang, his voice low as he passed him an earpiece and murmured quietly "'Ere boss, uh, you probably want to hear this all private-like first."

Over the initial hiss of static, he could begin to hear the voices of the Enforcer crew, their tones garbled but still the distinct, clipped and frighteningly efficient speech that matched what he'd seen them do from afar in combat.

*Deadzone Enforcers by "C. M. Minis"*

*"Engines warming back up. 25%, and warp-capable in fifteen minutes."*

*"Acknowledged. An additional hour was allotted to arrival time to account for core ramp-up; Proceed at restart within normal parameters to avoid unneeded damage."*

*"Acknowledged."*

A slight beeping could be heard from a console, an almost pleasant noise if not for the fact that Fang had a sinking feeling in his gut of what it meant.

*Corporation Marines by Paul Mullis*

*"Craft detected 75 klicks bearing down 60 degrees, port 30 degrees. Craft identified as Marauder ship, systems powered down and drifting in likely attempt to avoid sensor detection. 65 heat signatures detected onboard."*

Despite the recording being nearly a half-hour old by the time he heard it, his heart still raced as a pleasant female robotic voice chimed in with *"Weapon array clusters Six through Ten armed and online. Please designate target."*

The first voice, likely that of the captain cut

back in. *"Hold fire. LC-577, what is their projected target?"*

*"Sir, from their current drift course, like Outpost 5, 7, or 32. We'll know for sure once they re-engage their core."*

*"Outpost 7? Send a recon drone to follow their craft; The Council will want a record of this."*

*"Acknowledged."*

Fang looked up glumly as the transmission faded to static, the looming '7' on the wall above him like a spectre of Death rather than a harmless numeral. He indicated to Sartak to keep the transmission private, and had led out his team. If any of them noted his emphasis on higher-than-normal vigilance and readiness while they set out, no-one commented on it.

Another long two hours passed, little seen besides animal movement. Fang had become uneasy when he saw some mutilated corpses of what might have been animals or colonists; With their condition, it was impossible to tell, but they certainly had bled *profusely* over the entire courtyard they were found in.

It was barely a half-hour after that, continuing to follow the tracer-signal their employer had provided, that one of the stunty scouts had noticed her.

"'Ey! 'Ey boss! Boooosssss!" the stunt, Gabrielle, had whined at him as he came running back to the main group. Fang was nearly at the end of his patience, as the scouts had been jumping at animals and shadows all afternoon, but still humored the little goblin as she was babbling about "-some 'uman lady, boss! I think 'er back's all done messed up from how she's stumbling around, but 'ey, maybe we can ask 'er and see if there's a loot cache 'ereabouts."

As soon as he spotted her, though, Fang shoved the little stunty down, ignoring her muffled complaint, and he pulled out his monolensed-scope to take a better look. Unfortunately, what he saw just confirmed his suspicions.

"Gabby," he said, cutting off the under-the-breath stream of epitaths the stunty was muttering to him, "Gabby, I need you to go back and get the others, all of 'em, to come form up on me. Weapons are to be hot and fire on anything that isn't your friendly Captain, unnerstand?"

The stunty merely gulped, gave him a hasty salute, and peeled off in the direction of the main group. He watched her for a moment before returning the scope to his eye. the woman, or at least what was once a human woman, was visibly mutated by the Plague. Spiny ridges emerged from her shoulders and arms, and clothing was shredded where the bony armor plates and grotesque muscles had burst into being.

She was carrying something, clenched tightly in one fist, with a bulky Corporation boarding shotgun in the other hand. As she turned to look around, Fang ducked back down, and his mouth dried as he recognized the face he saw.

How could he not? Doctor Simmonds was a relatively-known face, indicated by the Corporation propaganda and wanted posters as a mere fugitive, albeit one with a very lucrative reward for finding. Capturing her would land them a payday to buy a ship big enough to dock the *Folly* inside of, but her expression had Fang unnerved and doubtful that such a takedown would actually be that easy.

He glanced back up over the rubble he had sheltered behind as he heard the rest of his troops coming up quietly behind him, but the good doctor was nowhere to be found. Instead, a few flurries of movement, coming their direction fast, had caught his eye, and he just muttered a flat "Oh, crap," as the Plague warms descended upon the warband.

*****

**Now...**

Fang was helpless to dodge as he fended off a pair of Plague hounds on either side, but as the Plague dragon (He still had a little part of him insisting this be some kind of demented fever dream) tried to swat him with his tail, Kilpatrick's stunt-bot interjected, catching the blow between two mechanical forearms as the loudspeaker blared *"Hey boss. Pleasant day for a bit of a scrum, eh?"*

Fang just stared, catching his breath for a moment, and Kilpatrick's bot knocked the tail aside, spilling over a group of the more human-looking Plague that were busy trying to set up an emplaced machine gun. As Kilpatrick dove forward, he dodged a pair of blurringly-fast talons, each leaving not even a scratch on his crimson paint.

Fang had to admit; For all of his numerous, cowardly, and annoying flaws, Kilpatrick was probably one of the best stunt-pilots that the Marauders had ever trained. He saw the bot *pirouette*, of all things, before coming up under the dragon's belly and swiping his buzz saw through one wing, and then the other. The beast howled and thrashed, now thoroughly grounded, and Kilpatrick avoided the snapping maw to reach under the jaw,thrusting upwards with the buzzing saw blade.

The blow mangled the beast, and it stumbled backwards, flailing in its death throes. Not willing to take chances, Fang roared over the noise of a grenade "Gark! Mark! Fire on the big 'un! Now!" His two Ripper pilots began pouring fire and missiles onto the dragon, and a few seconds of deafening blasts later, the monster finally let out a moan and slumped down, shaking the ruins his band had formed up around.

He was about to shout another order when a howl of a Plague, one of the larger ones, alerted him to the monster crouching and about to pounce on him over a traffic barricade.

*This is it,* he thought, as the battle began to move in slow motion. He couldn't bring his arm up in time, he knew that much instinctively, but he tried nonetheless as the monster arced through the air and landed heavily against him.

But the slicing claws of death never came, and instead Fang could smell a sharp stinging smell of burning flesh. Opening one eye, he let out a yell as he looked right back into the face of the Plague monstrosity, but daylight poked out the other side of a neat laser hole right over the top of the armored brow.

From atop one of the few still-standing parts of Outpost 7, Gabby let out a whoop and danced for a moment with her rifle as Fang gave her a weak thumbs-up and a smile. The top of the roof she was on was also occupied by the bulk of Mark's Ripper suit, and he laid down a fusillade of machine gun fire, ripping apart a few swarms of disgusting Plague-infested vermin, but also coming close enough to his own troopers that a few of them shouted at the Ripper to watch where he was aiming.

A distinct command rang out over the battle, and looking over Fang could see Doctor Simmonds standing atop part of the freshly-slain dragon. She shouted something and pointed, and Fang could see the swarms of infected creatures flow to her directions. They overwhelmed a pair of his troopers on one flank until Gark began cutting them back with a burst of flamethrowing inferno, but even as they stepped back, a Plague abomination larger than even their own Rippers strode forward, walking through the flame like it was merely smoke.

Worse, Fang could see the ground beneath the Plague ripple and shift as well. He thought it was just more of the vermin the Rippers had dealt with earlier, but taking a quick glance through his monolense, he could see that it was actually tendrils and small tentacles, growing out of the ground like perverse flowers and straining and grasping at movement nearby. He made a gagging noise in his throat, and was about to lower the spyglass when he caught sight of Simmonds.

She looked...different, taller almost. He looked again, and could see that her poise had straightened, from the hunched-over form she and the other Plague had taken to looking, well, proud. She held herself like a commander, and by the way the swarm

flowed around her, apparently the howling monsters thought the same. As he watched, she opened her still-clenched hand, revealing a trio of tiny syringes.

Gripping one delicately between two claws, she plunged it into her wrist, and Fang could see her back stiffen. The doctor dropped her shotgun, hunched over again before arching backwards. Her form shifted, the bones of the knee snapping audibly as they reversed direction and with the smaller spines on her shoulder protruding now to form an aura around her head, while her claws lengthened on her hands. He even saw a whipping spined tail for a moment, as she howled a screech of triumph, echoed by the Plague horde a second later.

*I guess that answers why the employer wanted her captured. And to the contract, I say sod that; I want to live, and I think there won't be many complaints if we leave promptly.*

He shouted a command for retreat, and his troops withdrew to the Outpost structure, Gabby still hooting and hollering as she snapped off more shots at the incoming tide of enemies. The monstrosities had begun to clamber up the fallen corpse of the dragon, using it as a crude ramp to ascend even as his soldier's fire cut them back down.

Fang grabbed a stunlance from a fallen Marauder, Jaren by the looks of what was left of the body. He gave the lance a brief heft, and used it to vault himself up towards

the top of the roof Gabby was on. He made it, barely, and as he scrabbled upright he yanked the lance up with him, using it to prod and electrify a Plagued human who tried to follow up after him.

A bass thrum made Fang's heart soar, as he heard the engines of the *Folly* come to rescue them. *Finally, reinforcements. About damn time, too; Today couldn't have gotten any worse.*

The soaring heart was grounded a moment later when the distinctive shape of the Enforcer patrol cruiser they saw earlier broke through the clouds rather than the *Stareater's Folly.* As he saw drop-chutes glow and lance downwards behind them, Fang swallowed, turned, and shouted encouragement and orders to his own soldiers.

*Well, can't say I didn't ask for that. Although, if we survive this clusterfrak, there will be one hell of a story to tell at the end.*

*Keep an eye out for more adventures from Captain Fang and the crew of the Stareater's Folly*▪

# THE STORY BEHIND THE COVER

**By Boris Samec**

Hello, fellow wargamers!

If you are regular reader of Ironwatch magazine, you already know that I am person behind most of the covers and illustrations for Ironwatch.

Usually I have free reign about subject and artwork style for cover and I try to represent every game system Mantic makes, to keep everyone happy and to add some variety.

As you probably have seen, this issue of everyone`s favorite magazine features Boston Miniatures' fantastic Deadzone diorama, for which I made background art as well as illustrations for the story. We thought that for this issue it would be cool if the cover is based on Boston's diorama, and I was asked to write out the process behind making this cover.

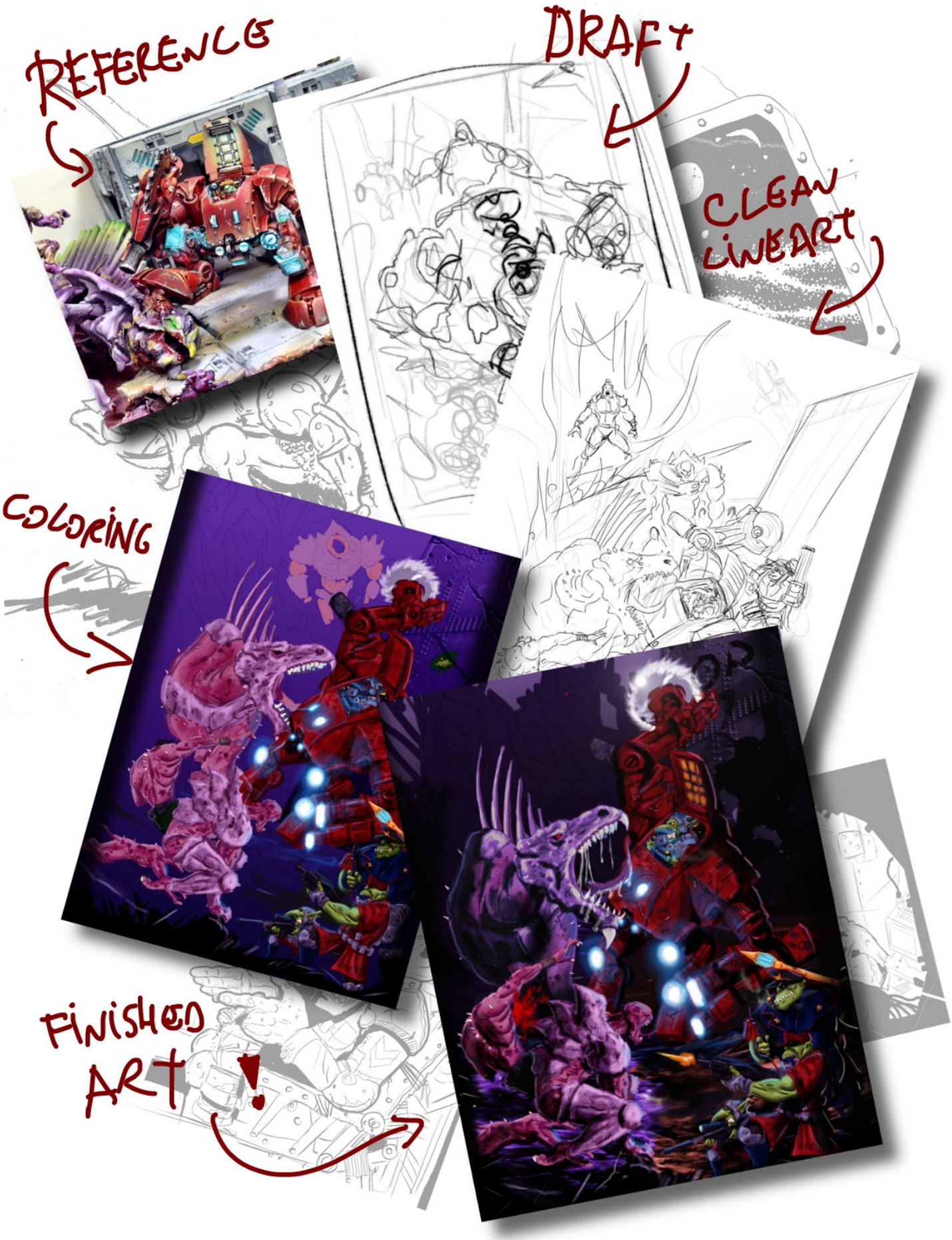
So I will try to keep this short, without writing about programs or techniques I use. On the following page is a picture which shows the creative process for making this artwork from beginning till the end, in a fun graphic way.

Now, my creative process normally is finding some cool miniatures from Mantic and then create visual story for them. This time, though, the story was already made and I just had to choose which part was most evocative and impressive. Going through pictures of the diorama I decided that stun bot is a must have, and it would be cool if I made image about the big plague monster fighting stun-bot.

*Deadzone Plague Zombies by Boris Samec*

So with main story set, I went about thinking what to add next. I liked the jumping Stage 2A miniature, and after I noticed the Stage 2A jumping on the goblin sniper in the diorama, everything clicked: A jumping Stage 2A and some Marauder trooper fighting for his life. And I had to add goblin sniper too.

But I can`t have a fight without the Marauder Commander, which is one of my favorite miniatures, so he had to be there somewhere also.


REFERENCE
DRAFT
CLEAN LINEART
COLORING
FINISHED ART !

After having a vague plan in my head, I started working on artwork. First I did rough sketches, to establish where everyone is in the picture. I had planned to add Doctor Simmonds in the background, but I dropped her because I wasn`t in the mood (However, she was illustrated for the story).

This step is also where I decided that the Marauder trooper would actually shoot a plague trooper, hopefully to add some tension as he shoots one plague, but another is heartbeat from ripping him to pieces. I like those kinds of images, where the combatants are frozen in time and viewer can`t be sure who will win: Think of fight between Rocky and Apollo Creed in the gym in the end of Rocky 3.

With the draft finished, the next step is making lineart and fixing the complete artwork in place, correcting anatomy and/or perspective. Although nothing is set in stone, this step is usually where my vision is transferred, more or less, from my mind on paper.

After lineart comes coloring, establishing tone and switching front and back, fixing if something slipped, adding details like the Marauder commander`s cigar, adding background, shadows and stuff like that. Then I tweak colors till I am happy, and the cover is done!▪

*Deadzone Enforcer sniper by Boris Samec*

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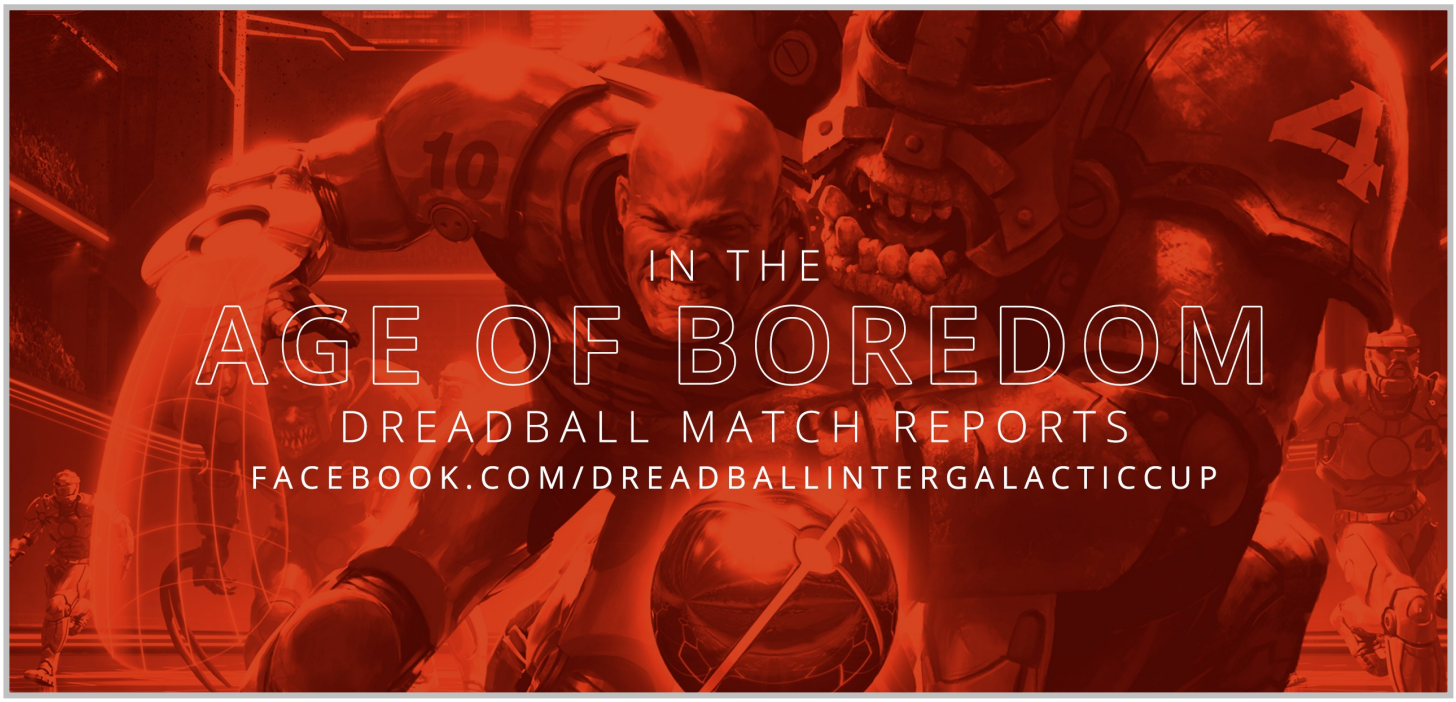


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*Undead Werewolf Troop by Juanje*

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